

'Reached an Understanding'

Donovan to See Castro Soon About Release of 22 Americans

FOIAb3b

By RICHARD H. BOYCE
Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

Attorney James B. Donovan will return to Havana "at a very early date" to discuss with Fidel Castro the release of 22 Americans held in Cuban prisons.

Mr. Donovan is in Lake Placid, N. Y., for a rest after his successful negotiation of the release of 1113 Cubans imprisoned by Castro since the April, 1961, Bay of Pigs invasion.

In an interview by telephone today he said:

"Castro and I have reached an understanding that as soon as it has been substantially made clear we have performed on our end of this deal (the exchange of \$53 million in foodstuffs and drug supplies for the Cuban prisoners) then he and I will discuss his declaration of a general amnesty for the Americans."

'BREAK' SOON

The Swiss embassy in Havana, which represents U. S. interests in Cuba, reported a "break might come in 48 hours."

Another indication of the imminence of the new negotiations was the Administration's withholding announcement of a crackdown on shipping to Cuba, which was expected yesterday.

Officials said the shipping ban might endanger negotiations and that it had been put off "until the end of the week or maybe until the first of the year."

Mr. Donovan would not say what indemnity Castro might ask for return of the Americans.

"There will be no ransom," he insisted. "I don't call any of this a ransom. It is simply that the Castro government released the Cuban prisoners and is now freeing some of their relatives on a people-to-people basis after a show of heartfelt sympathy by the people of this country."

"Ransom is an unfortunate choice of words. I don't think



TO CUBA—Six Red Cross nurses board a flight to Cuba at Miami. They will accompany some 1000 relatives of recently released Cuban prisoners when they sail to the U. S. on the African Pilot.

money is involved at all. He (Castro) never requested as much as \$1 in cash from me."

FINED

Mr. Donovan said the payment of \$2.9 million this week for release of 60 prisoners earlier this year was a "financial commitment undertaken by members of the Cuban families committee as payment of fines levied against the prisoners."

He said this was an "antecedent obligation" existing before he entered the prisoner negotiations.

The American Red Cross is working with Donovan in seeking the release of the Americans.

Gil Terrell, a Red Cross official here, said:

"We have been working for some time with the Cuban Red Cross and the International Red Cross committee of Geneva. The efforts had found no response. But now, as a result of Mr. Donovan's work, we are very hopeful. The atmosphere seems much

Mr. Donovan said he was keeping the Administration informed on his negotiations but had "not talked specifically" with Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

Mr. Kennedy master-minded the \$53-million ransom package arrangements in the Cuban prisoner exchange.

But Mr. Kennedy's office said he and Mr. Donovan talked by telephone at 10:30 p. m. Monday.

'NOT OFFICIALLY'

A U. S. official said the

difference, because the Americans were not part of the Bay of Pigs operations; they went to Cuba on their own."

He said some of the jailed Americans are political prisoners and some are not, "and some Americans in Cuba have been charged with ordinary offenses. They are all soldier-of-fortune types."

He said Castro might raise the question of citizenship of some of the prisoners who have Cuban parents or were born in Cuba of American parents.

Government "definitely is trying to get them (the Americans) out." But a State Department spokesman said this government is "not officially" involved.

He said "everything looks pretty good but we don't know yet what Castro wants."

There has been some criticism that money was raised to free Cuban prisoners while Americans were left in jail.

The State Department spokesman said "There is a